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Little Compton, R. I. The tablet contains 32 lines, more or less defaced. At its head is the name and title of a hitherto unknown king. "Chit-het," who, in the fourteenth year of his reign, speaks of "the very great misfortune of having no overflow of the Nile for seven years." Certain peculiarities in the style of writing and in the grouping of hieroglyphics assign this stone to the fourth century B. C. Evidently somebody had taken an old story of a seven years' famine and clothed it in modern dress for the purpose of exciting respect for some fourth century divinity. In the reign of this ancient king the seven years of famine had closed with the fourteenth year of his reign. The seven "fat years" had preceded them. The throne name of this king, different from his family name, has been found once, on an inscription over a door in the great pyramid of Sakkara, from which it appears that the king belonged to the first Egyptian dynasty, at least 1,500 years before the time of Joseph. The old story, with the name of the old king, was revamped in the XXII dynasty as a pious fraud by the priests. Dr. Brugsch believes in the real historical character of this newly-found stone, and calls Chit-het "the longest forgotten king of any epoch;" and he says that the stone will be prized through all time as an important piece of evidence for the actual occurrence of a seven years' famine in the time of Joseph.

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**Compilation in the Old Testament.\***—Few scholars would dispute the statement that recent investigation into structure, composition and style, has revealed the compilatory character of a large proportion of the books of the Old Testament. But few have realized its significance. It must ultimately influence the attitude of modern Christian teaching towards many problems that centre around Holy Scripture. The critical study of such facts as these provokes opposition, and students should have patient sympathy with such opposition, which rises out of reverence for the Bible and fear lest its authority and devotional power may be weakened in the popular mind. Other manifest objections to such study arise, such as want of historical and literary sympathy with the ancient Semitic mind, the unwillingness to let one's vision be modified, the fact that biblical criticism will never escape misunderstanding on the part of those who do not wish to welcome it. If we approach the literary analysis of the Old Testament with a recognition of the moral and religious significance of it as a whole, we will not be harmed but delighted with the new light gained. The books will be found to be largely compilations from the literary remains of many epochs, not written wholes, as ordinarily supposed, referrible to some distinguished name. This is true of the Psalter, which contains poetry from David to the Maccabees; Ecclesiastes is not Solomonic; Job, a post-exilic writing; Proverbs has many groups of sayings welded together; Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zechariah and Daniel illustrate characteristic phases in the compilatory process. The same is true of the historical books. The Pentateuch is very generally regarded as made up of four sources. We must be ready to allow these facts. It will be found that this element of compilation, so strange and startling, may unexpectedly aid us in our understanding and enjoyment of the books of Scripture. (1) It enables us to reconcile what seem to be confusions of facts, statements and forms of thought and language belonging to different ages, which stand together in the same book. (2) We are carried back to re-

\* The full title of the paper is *The Study of the Old Testament, with Special Reference to the Element of Compilation in the Structure of the Books*, by Rev. Professor Herbert E. Ryle, in the *Expositor*, May, 1890, pp. 321-339.

mote antiquity in the original documents and stories which the compiler has left intact. (3) Various lives of tradition and statements of many sources add to the general accuracy of the narrative. Thus the collection of Old Testament books reminds one of an old English cathedral, in which the strangely composite structure reveals the varying taste and sympathies of successive centuries.

Literary criticism of the Bible is more generally accepted in England than with us. Granting the position which is assumed in this interesting article, no one can fail to see that the authority of the Scriptures is in no way weakened, and that there are positive advantages accruing from its acceptance. The writer's remarks about the need that critics have sympathy with the prejudices and fears of the opponents of criticism are just and generous. Indeed, the spirit of the whole is admirable, whatever may be thought of its arguments.

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**Fasting in Holy Scripture.\***—The appointment of stated periods for abstinence from all food or particular kinds of food is so far from being characteristic of Judaism or of primitive Christianity, that both are conspicuous in comparison with nearly every form of heathendom by their rigid subordination, and (in some respects) by their absolute disparagement of it. The patriarchs are God-fearing men, but they do not fast. In the rest of the Pentateuch we have (1) Moses' fasting on Sinai, which, like Elijah's and our Lord's, was a fasting with ecstasy, not one of humiliation; (2) the fast of the Day of Atonement, which criticism constrains us to believe to be not of Mosaic origin, for no reference to it is made either in the historical books or the prophets down to the Exile, and the prophets, indeed, discountenance fasts (Joel's fast is more a rending of the heart than an ecclesiastical form); (3) the private vow of a woman (Num. 30 : 13). In the New Testament (1) Jesus' disciples stand out from the religious people of the day by their not fasting, and it is a great error to assume that the "bridegroom taken away" (Mark 2 : 18–20) argues for present fasting, since Christ is in every sense nearer to and more closely united with the true Church now than in the days of His flesh; (2) Matt. 6 : 16–18 (Luke 18 : 12) gives no sanction to fasting; (3) neither John, Peter, James or Jude refer to it; (4) in Matt. 17 : 21; Mark 9 : 29 the "fasting" is not a part of the original text; (5) in Acts the early church, being Jewish in form, fasts (Acts 27 : 9); (6) in Paul's epistles, ecclesiastical fasts are not once mentioned. Thus in the New Testament it is nowhere commanded nor represented as a necessary means of grace.

The very interesting and careful consideration of the biblical testimony about fasting which is here given is in Dr. Farrar's best vein.

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**The Critical Study of the Old Testament.†**—The books of the Old Testament present certain phenomena in regard to their style, phraseology, point of view, material, etc. Critical theories are efforts to account for these phenomena. [A brief outline of the analysis of the Hexateuch is given.] The principle underlying this analysis is, the gradual formation of the Hexateuch out of pre-existing sources, these sources being still (in the main) clearly distinguishable in virtue of the difference of style and representation by which they are marked. The indications of an age later than Moses are numerous. One can hardly compare the laws as given in Exodus, Deuteronomy and Leviticus without feeling the impossibility of their having been given within forty years.

\* By Rev. Canon Farrar, D. D., in the *Expositor*, May, 1890, pp. 339–351.

† By Canon S. R. Driver, D. D., in *The Contemporary Review*, February 1890, pp. 215–231.